



The Tree House Parent & Student Handbook 2014-2015

Christ the King Episcopal Church
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“Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children:
Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach
them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior
Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Prayer book, page 829

Mission Statement

The Tree House Episcopal Montessori School provides a Christian Montessori Environment that celebrates and empowers the genius of each child, cultivates a love of learning and fosters an appreciation for diversity.

We believe...

- *a child is a unique gift from God with limitless potential
- *children can be empowered to learn through developmentally appropriate activities
- *a warm, loving environment cultivates a love of learning

The Montessori Method

The Tree House Montessori curriculum is based on a process developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. A respected Italian physician and educator, Dr. Montessori began her educational journey over one hundred years ago. She was convinced that with appropriate techniques she could make a real difference in the way we educate children. The Montessori Method is based on careful observation of what children revealed about their developmental needs. Through observation and study, Dr. Montessori recognized that children learn best through play and by developmentally appropriate activities which provide avenues for learning.

The Montessori Method aids the child’s development into a complete adult human being; comfortable with himself, and with humanity as a whole. In a Montessori environment the children are provided with the materials they need and the freedom to use them to manifest their tendencies to explore, to repeat, and to master.

The Montessori classroom is a ‘living room’ for children. This environment is set up as a bridge between the home and the wider world. Children choose their activities from the beautiful, self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves that allow the child to learn through their senses. This approach is focused on giving support to the natural development of the human child.

A child is a gift from God that learns best about his world through experimentation and exploration. A child’s own awakened love of discovery and learning will stimulate his or her own education. This foundation will enable children to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career.

Licensure and Memberships

The Tree House Episcopal Montessori has a religious exemption from licensure by the Florida Department of Children and Families. License number X01WA0004. A copy of Florida's state licensing requirements may be obtained through the school office. The Tree House is voluntarily in compliance with the state's licensing requirements.

The Tree House is an active member of the American Montessori Society and the National Association of the Episcopal Schools. All Lead Teachers are certified by American Montessori Society in the age group they are teaching.

Hours of Operation

School hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday following the school calendar.

The Classrooms open to students at 8:00 a.m. and carpool pickup begins at 2:00 p.m. for pre-primary and 2:10 for primary children. Younger children will be escorted to an older sibling's classroom for pickup at the later time. Please be prompt and courteous. If the driver is not in carpool line by 2:25 p.m., children will be escorted to aftercare and a minimum one hour aftercare fee per child will be billed to family account.

A limited extended day option is available for an additional fee from 2:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Parents must sign children up for aftercare during morning drop-off. All last minute requests must be texted to the Director and may only be permitted if space is available. Please allow time so we may inform the child prior to carpool.

Entrance Requirements

The Pre-primary room serves children ages 18 months to 3 years of age. Children under 2 years of age are invited for the morning work cycle, playground and lunch only. They are considered half-day students and are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. After the child's second birthday, the child is eligible to stay for the full day program and may stay for the extended day program until 4:00 p.m. Appointments must be made if a later stay is required on occasion. Bathroom independence is a part of the curriculum in this class.

The Primary class serves children ages 3 -6 years of age. Children must be three by September 1st. It is expected that children will be established in their bathroom independence before entering the Primary classroom. Of course, we know that all children may have an occasional accident and we are ready to offer assistance. Kindergarten children will be five years of age by September 1st.

Notice of Non-discrimination

The Tree House Episcopal Montessori School admits students of any race, religious preference and national origin to programs, privileges and activities generally made available to the students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious preference or ethnic origin in admissions, or in its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs or other school-administered programs.

Admissions

The Tree House is committed to the development of cultural, racial, religious, economic and geographic diversity in our school community.

The application process for admission to The Tree House includes submission of an application and application fee and a meeting with the Director. The regular admissions process begins in February of each year for the following school year. However, new admissions are made throughout the school year, provided that there is space available. Priority is given for siblings of current students, Christ the King Episcopal Church members, Staff members, and five day students and other Montessori school transfer students.

The staff may conduct interviews with new students and their parents before students are accepted. The school places a great deal of importance on ensuring a good fit between the student and family and the school. Once all paperwork is submitted and information is obtained, the Director will notify parents of acceptance.

The Tree House reserves the right to remove from enrollment any student due to student or parent conduct which is disruptive and or detrimental to the daily operations of the preschool.

Registration and Tuition

- A \$100 application fee is paid at the time of application.
- A registration fee is paid within two weeks of acceptance into the program.

The annual application fee and annual registration fee are non-refundable and non-transferable.

The monthly tuition payment for each student is determined by the total tuition for the academic year divided into ten installments. The payment schedule is as follows:

- First installment is due by August 1st of the current calendar year or immediately if registration is after August 1st.
- Remaining installments are due the first of each month, September through May.

The Tree House uses the online billing system offered by TADS. Families are responsible to set up and maintain the payment of tuition through the TADS billing system. **Late fees will be applied to accounts. Failure to make prompt payments for two consecutive months may result in removal of the child from school.** A service fee will be applied on any checks returned by the bank.

No refund or deduction may be made from regular tuition due to illness, holidays, vacation, school closings due to weather or for any other reason. The school office must be notified thirty days prior to any student's withdrawal from enrollment.

Enrollment Forms

The following forms need to be completed and returned to the office for admission:

- Application
- Emergency Card
- Physical Examination Form 3040
- Immunization Record Form 680 or 681
- Photo Copy of Birth Certificate

Orientation

An orientation meeting for new parents is offered at the beginning of each school year to discuss classroom schedules and school policies.

An Open House is offered prior to the start of each school year to allow children and families to locate classrooms and meet teachers.

At the beginning of each school year, the first week of school is orientation week. The hours in the classroom are abbreviated this week for all children. Preprimary children attend for 1 hour each day with a parent or caregiver. Primary children attend school for 1 ½ - 2 hours each day during this week. Kindergartners will attend for 3 hours (8:30-11:30 p.m.) during orientation week.

Regardless of when enrolled, the first week of school is a child's orientation week.

Upon initial enrollment in The Tree House, an adult may need to stay with the child in the classroom for the first few days of school. This is essential at the Pre-primary level and is on an as-needed basis in the Primary classroom. The amount of time needed varies from child to child. If necessary, the parent will be asked to sit quietly in the classroom. During this time, the child will venture away from the parent and begin bonding with his new teachers as he/she adjusts to the classroom.

Bringing Children to School

Please drive slowly while on the church property. Doors will be unlocked at 8:00 am. Parents should park in the gravel parking lot located next to the classroom and escort children to the classroom door. Both parents and children should walk on the sidewalk. Parents say their good-byes at the Good-Bye Spot. It is very important to create a good-bye ritual that is consistent every time the child comes to school. Most children separate more easily when the good-byes are short and sweet. Allow and expect your child to carry their own lunchbox and to hang up his or her coat without parental assistance. The teachers will be happy to help your family create a routine.

Parents sign the sign-in sheet and inform the teacher of the child's arrival.

If asked to enter the classroom, please do so quietly. Montessori philosophy teaches us that we must respect the children, their environment and their concentration. By speaking quietly, this concentration is protected.

Attendance

Parents are reminded that late arrivals may result in a student missing important information and instruction. The first circle lesson begins at 8:30 a.m. An arrival after 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. Tardy families should not disrupt the circle lesson. The teachers want to share as much knowledge with the children as possible, so we ask parents to bring your child to school regularly and promptly. Parents must call the school office to alert the staff if a child will be absent or tardy. Any illness or injury should to be reported during this call.

Picking Children Up From School

Children are to be picked up no later than 2:00 p.m. unless enrolled in the extended day program. **Please drive slowly while on the church property. Do not get out of your car and do not pass the carpool line.** The pickup carpool line will begin at 2:00 p.m. for

the preprimary class on the gravel drive besides the classroom building. At 2:10 the primary children will begin boarding cars. For your convenience, the teachers will assist all children in the loading process. Drivers should remain seated with hands on steering wheel and car in park position. The safety of all children and teachers is paramount during the loading process. Please help children focus on the buckling process. Once your child is secured in a car seat and the teacher closes the door and gives a signal to proceed, the driver should drive forward to park and check the security of the buckle and turn around in the gravel parking lot to proceed out of the property. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure the child is safely secured before entering the public roadway.

If a child needs to leave early, make sure the Director is notified. Once on property, locate the Director and wait for child to be brought out of the classroom. Remember, we can release a child only to those persons authorized on the Release Authorization Form, and if the person is not recognized by the staff, he/she will be asked to present identification. We must have all authorization changes in writing. Emergency last minute changes may be called into the office or for faster delivery, a text may be sent to the Director. Confirmation of receipt must be received.

If your child is not picked up by 2:25 p.m., he or she will be escorted to the extended day program and the family account will be billed a minimum aftercare fee of one hour per child. If your child is picked up after 5:00 p.m., the family account will be billed a \$10.00 late fee and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

All of the information that is supplied to the school on the Emergency Card is extremely important. The telephone numbers for the emergency contacts are used when the child becomes ill or injured while at school. Our policy is to call the parents first. However, when the school is unable to reach parents, the emergency person(s) listed on the Emergency Card will be contacted to pick up the child in the parent's absence.

School Calendar

The school calendar is published each year. The school follows the holiday schedule of the Walton County Public School System with a few exceptions.

Discipline

Children who know that they are genuinely loved will have very few discipline problems. Occasionally it may become necessary to discipline by bringing a child close to the teacher and having the child return to an activity when the child can regain control. The

teacher will help the child to re-enter the group. The teacher will set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior. The children will not be “subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting; spanking or any other form of physical punishment which is prohibited by all child care personnel.” All discipline shall conform to Ch 402, Florida Statutes and Ch 65C-22, Florida Administrative Code.

The Montessori Philosophy is such that each person within the environment has certain rights. Ground rules are set up by and for the class and must be followed for the social cohesion of the entire group. The aim is self-discipline through purposeful activities. The idea is to: “like what you do, but not to do as you like”. When the rights of an individual within the environment are infringed upon, the following measures shall be taken.

- Positive example by teacher
- Private counseling with the child
- Behavior modification techniques including redirection – Child may be asked to return a work to the shelf or to go to another part of the classroom
- Child may be asked to stay close to the teacher or sit by himself/herself in the classroom or on the playground
- Removal of child from the classroom or playground may be necessary
- Parents will be notified of behavior and asked to retrieve students who continue to disrupt the classroom or playground.

Religion

We welcome children and families of all faiths. Our prayers are in the Episcopal tradition but are applicable to all faiths. We feel that it is impossible to teach little children without reminding them that there is a God who loves them as he loves all of his children. We encourage the children to practice the faith of their parents. Chapel services are part of the weekly schedule. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate.

Uniforms

The Tree House children enjoy a casual uniform every day.

- Tops: Polo style shirts in long or short sleeve in Forest Green or White with Logo.
- Bottoms: Comfortable khaki bottoms that allow the child to move freely and sit cross-legged on the floor. Elastic waistbands work well for young children and allow bathroom independence.

- Shoes: Rubber-soled, closed toe shoes that the child can put on and take off without help are the best shoes to encourage movement, independence and fun on the playground.
- Outdoor shoes are not worn inside the classroom. Slippers or “indoor”, soft-soled shoes are allowed if desired by the child.
- Clothing should be selected so that children can dress themselves.
- No cartoon characters or action figures are permitted on clothing, backpacks or lunch boxes.
- Please send children to school in weather appropriate clothing. Layers are a must in cold weather. We eat and play outside together as a class almost every day.
- Please provide a complete change of uniform clothing, including shoes, for the classroom.
- Label everything with your child’s name.

To purchase uniforms:

- Land’s End School Catalog:
Call 1-800-469-2222 or go to www.landsend.com/school
Name of account: The Tree House
Preferred School Number: 900141524
Logo Number: 1081597K

or

- Purchase polo style shirts at any retailer and call Tami Huston 850-419-1582 or email her at www.tamtamstitches.com for local logo embroidery.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Individual parent-teacher meetings are scheduled twice during the year. Close communication between parent and teacher is extremely beneficial to the learning environment and is welcomed by our staff. Student evaluations and progress will be discussed during a conference. Please set conference appointments with the Teacher.

Classroom Visits

All parents are invited and encouraged to schedule a classroom observation during the school year. Please contact your child’s teacher to schedule such a visit.

Parent Involvement

Parent Volunteers are welcome and appreciated. Please see your child's teacher and the Newsletter for opportunities in and out of the classroom.

School-to-Parent Information

A weekly newsletter will be sent home with children or via email each week. This newsletter includes information on school news and activities. It is important to stay informed on the many facets of your child's learning environment.

Class Roster

You will receive a contact list of the children enrolled in your child's classroom soon after the start of the school year. This list includes the students' name, address, parent/guardian's name, email addresses and cell phone numbers. This roster is not to be used for any purpose other than those directly related to the education of our children. If you do not wish for your information to be included on this list, please notify the Director.

Meals

Children will bring their own sack lunches. Include a cold-pack, water bottle and a clean cloth napkin (daily). Children enjoy opening their own containers. It is important to select easy to open lids and packaging. We encourage recyclable containers whenever possible.

It is our philosophy to teach your child how to establish healthy eating habits and to learn to be respectful of their own bodies both inside and out. We as teachers, do this not only by teaching about health and nutrition in the classroom, but by consistently modeling these healthy eating habits. As a Montessori parent, please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch.

A healthy balanced meal includes proper portions of protein, vegetables, fruits and whole grain carbohydrates. Healthy eating habits start early and your support is crucial to the nutritional education of your child.

Snacks

The classroom will have a snack schedule in place where each family is responsible on a rotational basis for supplying the children with healthy nutritious snacks. Our healthy snack includes: **fresh fruit, vegetables, Triscuits or Cheerios, and natural cheese**. It is important that you notify the teacher of any dietary restrictions or allergies your child may have.

Sharing

In the Primary room, the “Leader of the Day” has the privilege of sharing something brought from home. We ask that children bring one real item, not a toy, to share with classmates. Items shared in the past include: photos from vacation, trophies, something pertaining to a unit study such as rocks, feathers, binoculars and the like.

Toys

Toys and other personal items distract children from their school environment and may become lost or broken. Please leave toys at home.

Sometimes classroom items are inadvertently taken home—many of these are very valuable to the classroom. Please have your child return any materials even if they seem to have little significance.

Photographs

Individual and group photographs are taken during the school year. Photographs are taken in the classroom for various learning purposes and for occasional media release to local newspapers, marketing materials and website development. If you do not wish your child’s photograph released, please notify the Director.

Website

The Tree House Episcopal Montessori School web site is www.ThreTreeHouseCTK.org. This website includes a Parent section. A password will be provided to parents.

Pictures taken by parents of children other than their own on The Tree House/Church property or at any school function cannot be placed on any internet site without written permission of the parent. This policy includes Facebook and personal blogs.

Health/Illness

Parents and the school share the responsibility for maintaining health and preventing the spread of contagious diseases. In spite of our best efforts, children do get sick. Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill at school and they are expected to pick up the child within one hour of notification.

Please do not bring your child to school if he or she has had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours:

- **Diarrhea**
- **Unidentified rash**
- **Fever**
- **Vomiting**

Children will need to be symptom free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. We will call you if your child has a fever 100 degrees or greater or if they are vomiting or have diarrhea.

In the event of an outbreak of communicable disease, all parents will be notified by an Illness Alert. Parents should report all illnesses to the Director as soon as possible. To maintain confidentiality, the name of the child who is ill will not be given out to other parents.

Children may not attend school during the contagious period of a disease.

Guidelines are as follows:

- **Strep Throat:** 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins
- **Chicken Pox:** 7 days from onset of rash or until lesions are crusted
- **Influenza:** until all symptoms are resolved
- **Impetigo:** 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:** after fever and blisters are gone
- **Conjunctivitis:** 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins
- **Lice:** 24 hours after treatment begins and all nits are removed
- **Colds: after contagious cough ends and there is no purulent discharge from eyes and nose.**

Medication

The administering of medication to a child outside the doctor's office is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to school personnel except under rare circumstances. Only when absolutely necessary is the school willing to accept responsibility for administering medications. Medication to be dispensed by the school must be in original containers and must be labeled with the child's name and exact dosages. The school must have written authorization from the child's parent and licensed physician. All medications must be delivered to the Director and will remain in a secure locked location.

Handbook Agreement

The last official act of enrollment and acceptance of each student of The Tree House is the signing of a contract that states this handbook has been read and accepted as the governing vehicle between home and school. Both parents/legal guardians are to sign this agreement and return it to school prior to admission.

Thank you!

Thank you for entrusting your most precious treasure to us. The staff has the training, empathy and love necessary to help the children feel secure and provide the basis for a solid foundation for their further education. We look forward to experiencing these magical preschool and kindergarten years with you and your family.

Parent/Student Handbook

I/We have read the The Tree House Parent/Student Handbook, and am/are in agreement with the handbook and agree to be governed by it.

I/We understand that according to Florida State Law (Section 65c-22.006(2)) each child is required to have a physical examination (form 3040) and an immunization record (form 680 or 681) on file with the preschool before being allowed to attend class.

I/We have read and understand the disciplinary practices used by this child care facility and contained in this handbook as prescribed by Florida State Law (Section 65c-22.006(4)(c)2).

Student's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Student's Teacher

Date

All parents and guardians need sign and return this form to the school.

